The Sketch

No. 2561—Vol. CXCVII. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1942. ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

WIFE OF THE "NON-STOP" AIR C.-IN-C. EGYPT——MRS. CONINGHAM.

MRS. CONINGHAM *is the wife of Brisbane-born Air Vice-Marshal Arthur Coningham, Air Officer C.-in-C. Egypt, whose name will go down in history as personal director of the dynamic and relentless night-and-day Allied air onslaught on Rommel's transport, swiftly retreating westward along the coastal road from El Alamein, hotly pursued by the Eighth Army. Air Vice-Marshal Coningham married the then Lady Frank, widow of Sir H. G. Frank, in 1932; they have one daughter. Mrs. Coningham is secretary to the King George and Queen Elizabeth Victoria League Club for Dominion soldiers, where she helps the men by giving information and advice.*

SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH" BY LENARE.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Wheels Within Wheels. How right they were in Erewhon, where a machine was a felony! If any modern mortal has ever doubted that he is the slave, rather than the master, of cogs and wheels, let him consider the miserable estate to which he is now brought. His watch stops; unless he is a singularly privileged person, it will remain stopped for duration. His house is full of mechanical gadgets; let one refuse its office, and what is the poor machine-slave to do? "Send a man round?" You might as well ask for a genie of the lamp. Get a spare part? Yes, if you know a man whose wife's cousin knows a chap in the Ministry, who can get a Priority Order—and then what? I know of a certain refrigerator which, as an essential member of a canteen, definitely contributes to the war effort. It went temperamental, as the best-regulated refrigerators will. By the exercise of superhuman efforts and influence, the manufacturers were induced to send a technician. A trivial job, said he, which he could do on the spot in an afternoon if he had the replacement part. But in order to get that part, he would have to obtain a Priority Order. On the whole, he summed up, it would be quicker and safer to take the whole outfit back to the works, and then he *thought* he could return it in working order *about next April.*

"If it swoops low and sits on a tree, it's probably a bird!"

DRAWN BY PITTS.

Switch-craft. How misguided was the Prometheus who first brought electricity from heaven! I have long regarded it as one of the curses of our age. It has always filled me with a sense of irritation and impotence to be surrounded by contrivances on which I depend and of which I am completely ignorant. I do not know what this electricity is, nor how it works, nor what is inside the boxes and cages which contain it, and I am completely at the mercy of "experts," who do not seem to know much about it either, except some pompous jargon and a few mechanical tricks. And now there are not even any experts. The switches and knobs have got me where they want me, and I always knew they would, some day or other. Perhaps it is just as well that I am relieved of at least one machine which has always baffled and mocked me—my car. I have just written its obituary notice and posted it to the Local Taxation Officer. I have also kissed good-bye to my tyres—but I did that the day I jacked-up the old bus. I contribute them gladly, if they are going to help peace to roll on; but I only hope they are not going to enable another official to go whizzing round the country harassing the citizenry.

Let Nothing You Dismay. Resignation is not enough to sanctify sacrifice; a patriotic subject *enjoys* it. He will kindly enjoy it this Christmas, and no nonsense about it. Lord Woolton is very firm. Not one extra ounce! "Women," I read, "will have to make plum-puddings with prunes, potatoes and carrots." Let them, by all means, make such things, if they have the brutality, but let them not, my Lord, call them plum-puddings, but rather vegetable poultices. I don't know whether a liberal admixture of bachelor's buttons would redeem the flavour, but it is probably a crime to put a button in a pudding, and anyhow, there aren't any buttons to put. The prescription for mince-pies is prunes, stale bread-crumbs, chopped apple and spice—always these prunes, but this time the carrot menace seems to have abated! No icing on the cake, but a "mock-almond" compound of haricot beans, almond essence and a "knob of butter." Don't think I am grumbling, my Lord: I know I am very lucky to have any prunes, carrots or haricot beans at all; it is only that I have to get *adjusted* a little. All must share in the festive austerity drive. Not a toy for the infants, not a rattle for the baby! The children are crying for toys, and a Herod-like government hardens its heart. But I do not think the children will cry very long, for they will do as Nature bids them, and make their own toys out of rag and string; and get much more fun out of it than out of talking dolls and tin trains. But, good heavens! I had forgotten! There is no rag and string! It is all wanted for munitions, and if they use it for playthings they will be juvenile delinquents! Poor little devils—I abandon them to their fate!

WHAT A BLESSING IS RADIO!

DRAWN BY BERT THOMAS.

Powder and Shot. They can, however, be consoled (if good little girls and boys) with—what do you think? A banana! A ripe, luscious, vitaminiferous banana—in the form of a white, flaky powder, all the way from Brazil. You may have to persuade a cautious child that this is not Gregory's Powder in a subtle form, but, having overcome that obstacle, you can open up a vista of delights—a "delicious milk shake,"

an "attractive breakfast dish" (mixed with golden syrup), or, blended with gelatine, a "satisfying blancmange." Fortunate little ones! Yet some of you, perchance, will ask why did we ever cease to be monkeys? *They* don't have to bother with white, flaky powders! Back to nature, my children, for the sweet, succulent banana-on-shell!

Goes by Favour.

Another and a more serious privation, just to keep Christmas merry. I don't know whether it will be possible to get mistletoe this year—it all depends on whether or not there is a Mistletoe Controller; probably there is, and it may be necessary to get a permit from him or from the Ministry of Agriculture or the Forestry Commission. I should not bother, if I were you, because even if you do get a bunch, you will be ill-advised to behave under the mistletoe as the mistletoe is supposed to demand. Osculation of any kind is now frowned upon by authority and may at any moment be made illegal by the Ministry of Health. The reason is obvious. If coughs and sneezes spread diseases, what about kisses? A County Medical Officer has recently warned all who are addicted to this popular but unhygienic practice that it is a prolific source of anterior poliomyelitis. It does not relieve the situation much to learn that this is only another name for infantile paralysis. How crude, how earthy are these scientists, how insensitive to the finer things of life! And I cannot help thinking that they are being alarmist. If they are right, then, to judge by the lingering salutes which I have constantly witnessed on the screen, all Hollywood must be paralytic—which would be a harsh judgment. However, before doing any Great Lover stuff under the mistletoe, make sure that you are not allergic to poliomyelitis.

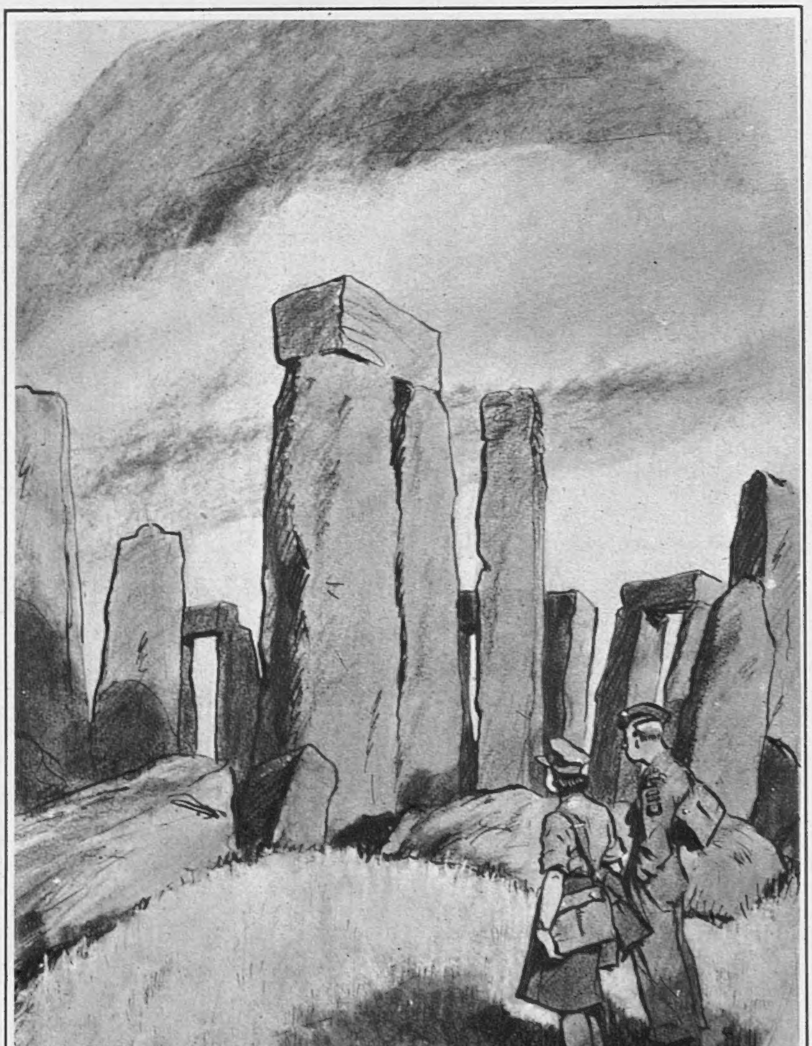
And No, Say All of Us!

To be frank—while I should hate to throw cold water on any of the traditional joys of Yuletide—I doubt whether anybody has ever found a mistletoe embrace to be a beautiful memory. Apart from the fact that the flattering attention usually falls upon a Visiting Aunt whose life is lacking in romance, there is nothing quite so painful as forced conviviality. It sits ill on the English. I know of few more embarrassing experiences than that hideous moment when you fumble for and pump-handle the hands on your right and left and shriek "He's a jolly good fellow" an octave too high. As the expressive phrase is, you simply don't know where to look. There is only one physical and mental condition in which this social ordeal can be endured without agony, and I prefer not to describe that condition in plain terms to sensitive readers.

Jolly Good Bellow.

This is heresy; and I should not have dared thus to expose my native unamiability if the question had not been raised by the choral efforts of the Lords and Commons Liedertafel after the great speech of General Smuts. Critics, evidently unappreciative of the timbre of our legislators, have unkindly described this as an anti-climax; and one commentator went so far as to describe our traditional "musical honours" as a "melancholy dithyramb." So now the cat is out of the bag, and one candid person has had the courage to say what many many others have long and bitterly felt. It does seem a reflection on our lyrical qualities that if St. George were to appear and slay another dragon before our eyes, the best we could say of him would be that he was a jolly good fellow. There is now a good deal of controversy as to who the original Jolly Good Fellow was. Nobody seems to know, but it does not really matter, because obviously he was not a jolly good fellow at all, but a public enemy. Personally, I am convinced that the pæan was first heard at a hunting breakfast or dinner, and that in its original version it consisted entirely of bass and tenor hiccups, with horn obbligato.

"3 down . . . 'a fluctuating or warbling note of varying pitch' . . . 5 letters."



(Stonehenge.) "They must have dropped some pretty heavy stuff here, Gertie!"

DRAWN BY KENNETH BEAUCHAMP.

The Unsinkables.

I hope there is some more dignified form of appreciation than this for some of our Hearts of Oak who daily astonish the world by their defiance of death and danger. It is well known that you can shoot a film-hero full of holes and he will be skipping about like a two-year-old in the final sequence. You can throw the hero of a serial into a volcano, and he will hop out as bright and lively as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But I am beginning to think that the most indestructible mortals known to science are some of our lads of the Navy and the Merchant Marine. I have been collecting a few of their adventures lately. A Third Officer was twice sunk, and twice picked up, on a convoy to Russia, and on his way back was immersed and fished out again. His way of describing his journey was that he had "hitch-hiked to Russia and back." Nine men were adrift on a raft for seven weeks; their provisions consisted of a piece of string, a bag of salt and a keg of water; they lived on raw fish and rain-water caught in a turtle shell; and they all survived, to the annoyance of their daily escort of sharks. But the world's record in human buoyancy seems to be held by an A.B. of Chester, who was torpedoed on the *Royal Oak*, the *Rajputana* and the *Prince of Wales*, then torpedoed on another ship at Singapore, and bombed and "sunk" on the patrol

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vessel which picked him up. Taken to Australia, he was "billeted" on a ferry-boat in Sydney Harbour, when a Japanese submarine bobbed up and potted him as he slept. He swam quietly ashore. The sharks, human and other, have now (Reuter reports) given up the unequal contest.

"Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I maintain that the most urgent necessity is far-sightedness!"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

All in the Day's Work. Little incidents of this kind—and they are happening every day—are going to make it very difficult in future for writers of "strong" fiction. Their most strenuous, hairbreadth escapes are going to be stale old stuff. I don't see, either, how they are going to endow their he-men with heroic qualities which are going to make the least impression on the reader, considering the sort of things which are being done all round us. Charging the guns, or slaying the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, is more picturesque, but less impressive, than walking up to a live bomb or land-mine, toying with it, and then quietly "disposing" of it. I like that official word "disposal," used of five hundred or a thousand pounds of concentrated earthquake! Twice lately it has been reported—and doubtless there are other unreported instances—that surgeons, who, by the rules of their profession, remain for ever anonymous, have extracted live cannon-shells from wounded men. All in the day's work! This aspect of "disposal" is a new phase of surgery, and it might be applied with advantage to dentistry. It has often occurred to me that if dentists would treat teeth as delicately and as respectfully as they would treat an H.E. shell, the world would be a happier place than it is.

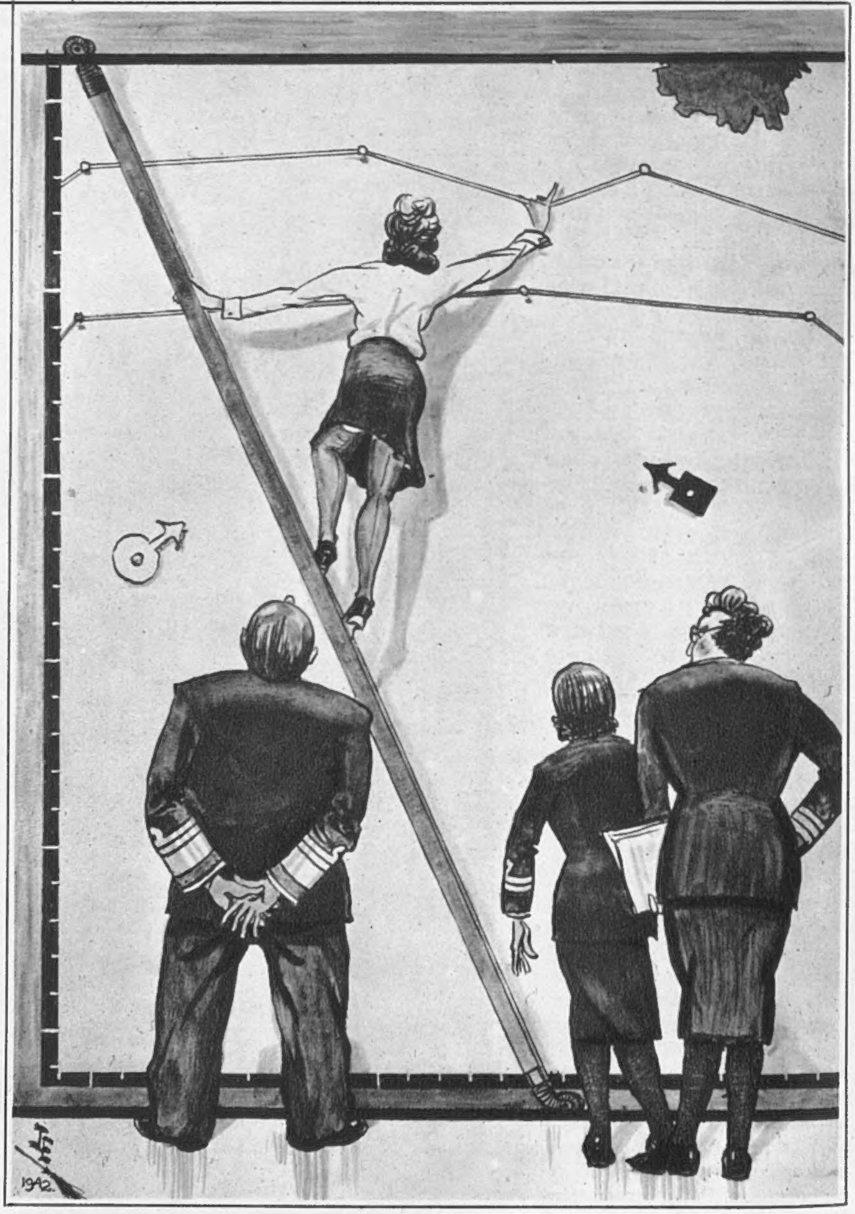
Speech is Silver. Irish eloquence is justly celebrated, but the fate of orators in their own country seems to be the same as the fate of prophets. The Eire newspapers have laid down a rule that if orators want their speeches reported, they must pay for the space. Will the example spread to adjacent islands? It might be better than the present system, by which the speeches of Hon. Members are so truncated that they only faintly resemble what they really said. Some may think that an advantage; but certain apprehensions are being felt at Westminster. Applied to after-dinner speakers, the rule, of course, would give universal satisfaction, and is long overdue. It might not be unwelcome even at Trade Union Congresses, where I see that one delegate recently "dazzled and delighted the conference, quoting what Voltaire (1694-1778) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) wrote about liberty, and suggesting what Marcus Aurelius (121-180) and Anatole France (1844-1924) might have written." But can't we do better than the Irish precedent? If Members and public speakers were *made* to pay space-rates for every word they uttered—wouldn't that be an improvement? Couldn't the Exchequer have a rake-off? Think it over, Sir Kingsley!

PAPER OBJECTIVE.

15,000,000 leaflets dropped by the R.A.F. over Vichy France to explain the Allied action in North Africa! *You* helped, with your salvage letters, diaries, cartons, and so on, to send these vital messages; besides this, your waste paper went into the munitions with which General Montgomery routed Rommel out of Egypt. Keep up the good work!

Paying for Your Fun.

In support of a loan campaign, an anonymous subscriber in Australia has paid a million pounds, in purchase of war-loan, for a hundred seats at a preview at a Melbourne picture theatre. I applaud and revere this munificent patriot, but I do hope his action is not going to be a general precedent. Truth to tell, I don't always feel that I get excessive value for my four bob, and I really can't run to £100,000, not even to see—but let us name no names!



"Appleton—either the Admiral routes the convoys further south, or Snodgrass goes into trousers!"

DRAWN BY J. E. BROOME.

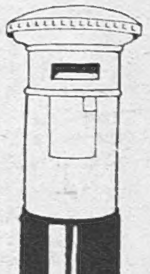
The fiftieth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"I ALWAYS THINK THEY MUST FEEL SO CHILLY ABOUT THE LEGS!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Our Wine Merchant, who is always rather kind to us because he used to play cricket with Charles's father, was kinder than usual this month and sent us an extra bottle of gin, so we asked Faith, who is home on leave, and the Conductor to drinks on Saturday night. Lady B. came too, and it was all quite pre-war and the greatest fun.

In the middle the Linnet, who had got a day off, walked in looking so radiant that I knew something must have happened. " You 'd better tell us straight away," I said as she stood there smiling and blinking in the light.

" Who is it ? " said Charles sternly.

" Philip," said the Linnet, and there was a silence, because nobody could think of any adequate reason why she shouldn't be engaged to Philip, who is very nice.

" The Linnet was folded to that warm and loving bosom."

" He hasn't asked my consent yet," said Charles, who has confided to me more than once that he was looking forward to throwing his weight about over his daughter's engagement.

" Sweetie Pie, he 's coming to see you as soon as he can get some leave," said the Linnet soothingly.

" Mind you, there 's to be no question of an engagement until I have interviewed this young man," said Charles pompously.

" Don't be tiresome, Charles," said Lady B., who loves a romance. " Come here, Linnet, and let me kiss you."

" The Conductor sucked his knee."

The Linnet was folded to that warm and loving bosom, and I stood, with the cocktail-shaker in my hand, prodding gently at my emotions as one prods with one's tongue at a tooth which may begin aching any minute. I was pleased and surprised to find that, contrary to all I had been told of a Mother's Heart on such occasions, mine was like a Singing Bird, and my eyes filled with joyful tears, so that I overfilled the Conductor's glass and it all ran down over his legs.

" Look what you 're doing ! " yelled Charles, and the Conductor sucked his knee so that not a drop of the precious fluid should be wasted.

You have always said, Robert, that there is only one thing more depressing than a woman talking about her daughter's wedding, and that is a woman talking about her daughter's engagement, so I will lay off the Linnet and begin on Faith, who is neither my daughter nor engaged, though, of course, we all hope she will fix things up with the Conductor some day.

After all the excitement about the Linnet had died down we found ourselves in a very emotional state, and the Conductor fixed Faith with a mournful gaze so full of dog-like devotion that Charles cried, " Why, in God's name, don't you marry the man, Faith, and put him out of his misery ? "

" I don't know," said Faith, opening her blue eyes very wide.

" Well, it 's time you did," said Charles crisply.

" Don't be harsh with her, Charles," said the Conductor.

" He isn't being harsh ! " cried Faith. " He couldn't be ! Could you, my Angel Kiss ? ", and she threw herself into Charles's arms.

The Conductor winced, and I wondered whether it would ease the situation if I were to throw myself into his arms. I looked at Lady B. The same thought, I could see, had crossed her mind, but catching my eye, she gave an almost imperceptible shake of the head. The Linnet, who was the only person present who could have made this gesture with success, was lost in a happy dream, so the only thing was for Lady B. to get up and say it was time to go home.

I think the Conductor must have been upset, because he left his mackintosh behind. He rang up later to ask if it were there, and we said yes, hanging on the banisters, and after dinner he and Faith came round to fetch it.

" This isn't my mackintosh," said the Conductor.

We said it wasn't ours but a Stranger to the house. Then Charles said might it be Lady B.'s ? And I said no, Lady B.'s was a grey one.

" Well, I must say it 's all very *peculiar*," said Faith, looking at us in a meaning sort of way.

" I remember distinctly," said the Conductor. " I came in carrying it over my arm and put it over the banisters. It was a new one, too."

" I hope you aren't accusing us of stealing the mackintosh ? " I said.

" Not stealing exactly," said Faith, " but, of course, with the Linnet getting married you 're bound to be short of coupons."

" Well, I 'm damned ! " said Charles.

" Don't be silly, Conductor, dear," I said, for I felt the situation was becoming fraught with unnecessary bitterness. " Of course it 's your coat. Just pop it on and see."

The Conductor popped it on. It was not his coat. It was a woman's coat and far too small for him. " There you are ! " cried Faith triumphantly. " I knew it was Henrietta's."

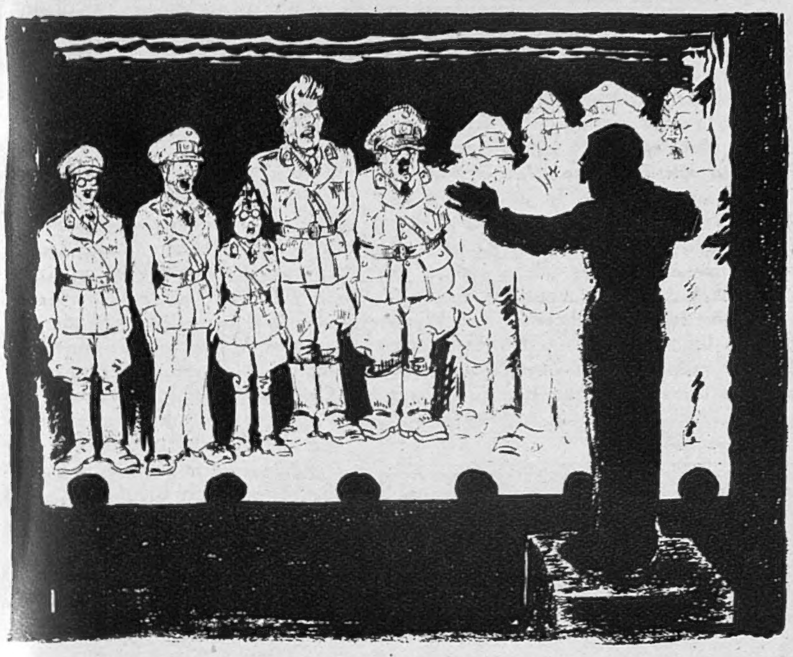
" But why should Henrietta try to exchange her own coat, which fits her, for the Conductor's, which doesn't ? " said Charles.

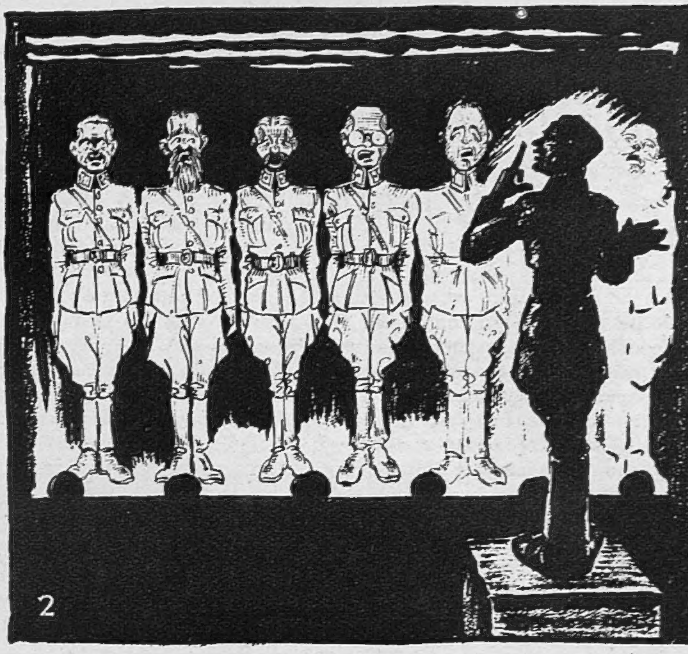
" My coat was new," said the Conductor with an ugly look. " We aren't accusing *anybody*," said Faith, but this remark did not ring true, and Charles held the door open for her in silence.

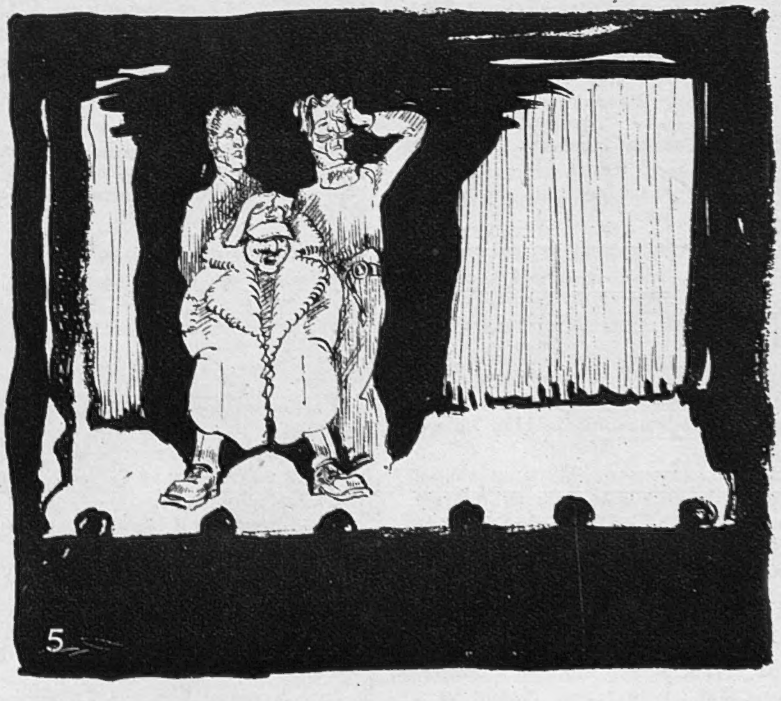
Later the Conductor rang up to say the coat was his landlady's, which he had brought along by mistake, and his was at home, hanging in the hall. Charles thinks the incident may have drawn them closer together.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,
HENRIETTA.

" It was not his coat."







1. *"Oh! Belgique! Oh! Mère Chérie!"*

2. *"Holland, ik houd vanje."*

3. *"France! Mère des arts, des armes et des lois."*

4. *"Jeszcze Polska nie zginela."*

5. *"On Ilkla Moor bah't 'at."*

LIEUT. J. F. WATTON, British prisoner of war in Germany, occupies his spare time in Oflag IVC making drawings illustrating the conditions under which he and his companions live. Some were published in "The Sketch"; and our sister-paper, "The Illustrated London News" has reproduced a series, the [*Continued opposite.*

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last of which appeared in the issue dated September 26, 1942. On this page we give an amusing set of five drawings by Lieut. Watton, showing the performers at an International Concert held at Oflag IVC singing songs of their respective nations, with tremendous *verve*. Lieut. Watton, who was captured near the Somme in June 1940, was in another camp before he was transferred to Oflag IVC, "the bad boys' camp." His drawings enable people at home to get an excellent idea of the life of their friends and relatives in enemy hands, and illustrate the fortitude, good fellowship and humour so universally displayed.

FROM THE DRAWINGS BY LIEUT. J. F. WATTON.

ALLIED NATIONS' CONCERT — IN A GERMAN PRISONERS-OF-WAR CAMP.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

AN American film that is rivalling, and in a few places even beating, the success of "Mrs. Miniver" in its own country is "THE WAR AGAINST MRS. HADLEY" (Empire). It is what is known in show business as a "sleeper"—a modest, unbruited film, with no very big star names in it, which was not expected to break records—and has. It does not need any very deep critical penetration to discover just why "The War Against Mrs. Hadley" is a hit with its own countrymen. It is the first film to show the reaction of the ordinary American civilian to war—not war away across the ocean, not Spain's or China's or even Britain's war, but America's war. It touches for the first time on the biggest drama that has ever come into the lives of millions of men and women over there. It is a true picture, even if rather a sketchy one, of the bewilderment and restlessness of those early days of conflict, in which all life, as we have known it, is turned upside down, in which privilege must give way to priority, and the individualist dazedly finds himself part of a regimented nation. The emotions shown in "Mrs. Hadley," the adjustment to the black-out, the call-up, the bleak communiqué, are not new to us in this country. The film, to English audiences, may seem rather a reminder of the past than a page of current history. But its very familiarity is a tribute, in a way, to the basic honesty of the subject. It is easy to understand its appeal to a nation that has not yet been a year at war.

Mrs. Hadley (Fay Bainter), although a Washington matron, is a type of which America has no monopoly. She is a spoilt, handsome society woman, with a double rope of pearls, an exquisite coiffure, a taste for black velvet gowns with a classical line, and important friends in important offices. She stands for security, complacency and the old order, and when petty regulations flout her, she is accustomed to brush them aside with the statement, "This is ridiculous!"

The film opens on Mrs. Hadley's birthday. Her hairdresser, who obviously has every reason to, sends her a singing telegram. Her son (Richard Ney) and daughter (Jean Rogers), her lap-dog physician (Miles Mander) and her old school-friend (Spring Byington) are all lunching with her. So is her faithful admirer, Elliott Fulton (Edward Arnold), a high official in the War Department.

In the kitchen they are piping the birthday-cake. With an almost delicious *frisson* of anticipation we read the legend in icing: "Happy Birthday to Mrs. Hadley. December 7th, 1941." Drama has not long to wait. The ritual luncheon over, Mrs. Hadley relaxes in Her Chair, invites Her Guests to turn on the radio for Her Beethoven. But instead of Beethoven, the air is crackling with drama. "The sky is full of 'planes! . . ." gasps the excited voice of the announcer. ". . . And so war has come to the Western Hemisphere with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour." There is a moment's silence. Then—"How could they, on My Birthday?" says Mrs. Hadley in a bleak, thin voice. I found this an exciting opening to a film that didn't quite live up to its expectations. Mrs. Hadley's painful orientation to the war is a little over-sentimentalised for my likings. But if the treatment isn't all that we might wish at all times, the material is consistently intriguing. There is real drama—there always has been drama—in the story of the lonely egotist who has to adjust herself to a new world with bitter compromise and strange new tolerances.

Mrs. Hadley's son is drafted and sent out to fight the Japs. Her old friend in the War Department will wangle no exemptions. Her daughter works in a canteen and marries a Common Soldier (Van Johnson). Her butler becomes an A.R.P. warden, and her school-friend joins a first-aid party run by her bitterest rival. The lap-dog physician rushes off to attend the symptoms of the wife of an auto magnate. And since the telegraph boy's voice has broken before the next family celebration, not even her hairdresser can send Mrs. Hadley a singing telegram. However, events move fast in wartime Washington. By the time we leave Mrs. Hadley she is not only an ardent sponsor of the A.R.P., the Red Cross and the Ladies' Aid, but the mother of a D.S.C. and about to become a grandmother. It is a notable triumph for the War against Mrs. Hadley, considering that it is not a year yet since Pearl Harbour, though it may seem like a century to us.

Along with "Mrs. Hadley" in the Empire programme is a short war film of our own, which manages to achieve in its fifteen minutes' running-time a good deal of what Professor Joad is apt to describe as "tr-ruth and beauty." The title is "WE SAIL AT MIDNIGHT." It was made for the Crown Film Unit by a young director named Julian Spiro, with the joint blessing of the British and U.S. Governments and the National Film Board of Canada.

The function of "We Sail at Midnight" is to bring to life, for the ordinary picturegoer, the cold, official phrase, "Lease-Lend procedure," to show how closely Britain and America are working together on the production of war material. The film opens with the final tests, somewhere in England, of a new tank. The trials are successful, the model is approved and scheduled for mass production. But the whole programme depends on the prompt delivery of certain vital machine tools from America.

The request is sent to Washington. The machines, already earmarked for the American war effort, are diverted to Britain. But they have to be crated, rushed to the docks, shipped to Ottawa, in time to catch the Atlantic convoy. Can it be done? In an atmosphere as tense as anything from the old days of the sheriff and his posse, the suspense drama is developed. We see the trucks rumbling through the wintry roads of Connecticut, hear the voice of the American radio cop, which has told us so often about a murder on the corner of Fifth and Main, intoning—"Truck convoy carrying urgent war cargo on Route 49, heading for Brooklyn Docks. Give them right of way."

At home in the factory there is an empty space. The Progress Chart on Tank Forty-Something records "Nil—awaiting gear machines." A little longer and the whole schedule will be held up. But the nick-of-time rescue is coming from overseas. The machines reach New York, Brooklyn Docks, Ottawa, plough through the cold and dangerous seas to Liverpool. We see them steaming south on a British goods train, their Connecticut labels a little tattered now. And last of all we see the finished tanks rolling out under a grey sky full of barrage balloons.

It is a grand film the Crown people have made of this small but dramatic incident in the prosecution of the war. "We Sail at Midnight" is not only good propaganda, but good picture-making too.

THE BEST THEATRES.

*Starred by "The Sketch." ***=highest value.*

**Adelphi: "THE DANCING YEARS." Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

***Aldwych: "WATCH ON THE RHINE." Diana Wynyard, Anton Walbrook, Athene Seyler, Valerie Taylor. Anti-Nazis in the U.S.A.

***Apollo: "FLARE PATH." R.A.F. "ops." Adrianne Allen.

**Cambridge: "WALTZ WITHOUT END." Unexpected version of Chopin's life and music.

**Coliseum: "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK." Revival, with Evelyn Laye.

**Comedy: "MURDER WITHOUT CRIME." Raymond Lovell, well supported.

***Duchess: "BLITHE SPIRIT." Noel Coward's play. Fay Compton, Kay Hammond; Cecil Parker; Margaret Rutherford.

** Globe: "THE MORNING STAR." Emlyn Williams in his own raid-nights play. Angela Baddeley.

**Haymarket: "THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA." Vivien Leigh in a Shavian revival. Well cast.

***His Majesty's: "DU BARRY WAS A LADY." Frances Day, Arthur Riscoe star in mad musical comedy with Cole Porter music.

**Lyric: "NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH." Well-produced, slick gangsterism. Hartley Power, Linden Travers, Robert Newton.

**New: Sadler's Wells season of ballet. Margot Fonteyn, Robert Helpmann. Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert.

**Palace: "FULL SWING." Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert at their best.

**Palladium: "BEST BIB AND TUCKER." Tommy Trinder and Co. again.

***Phoenix: "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST." With John Gielgud, Edith Evans, Cyril Ritchard, Gwen Ffrangcon Davies, Jean Cadell, Peggy Ashcroft, J. H. Roberts.

**Piccadilly: "THE LITTLE FOXES." American drama with Fay Compton.

**Prince of Wales: "GET A LOAD OF THIS." George Black's surprise musical. Vic Oliver, Jeanne Ravel, Celia Lipton.

**Princes: "WILD ROSE." Jessie Matthews and Richard Hearne in lively musical comedy.

**St. Martins: "CLAUDIA." Pamela Brown and Hugh Sinclair on an American farm.

**Saville: "FINE AND DANDY." Good show, with Leslie Henson, Stan Holloway, Dorothy Dickson, Douglas Byng.

***Savoy: "THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER." Brilliant boorishness by Robert Morley.

**Stoll: "LILAC TIME." Revival, with George Graves, Derek Oldham, Frank Titterton, Irene Eisinger.

*Strand: "NIGHT OF THE GARTER." Revival, with Sydney Howard.

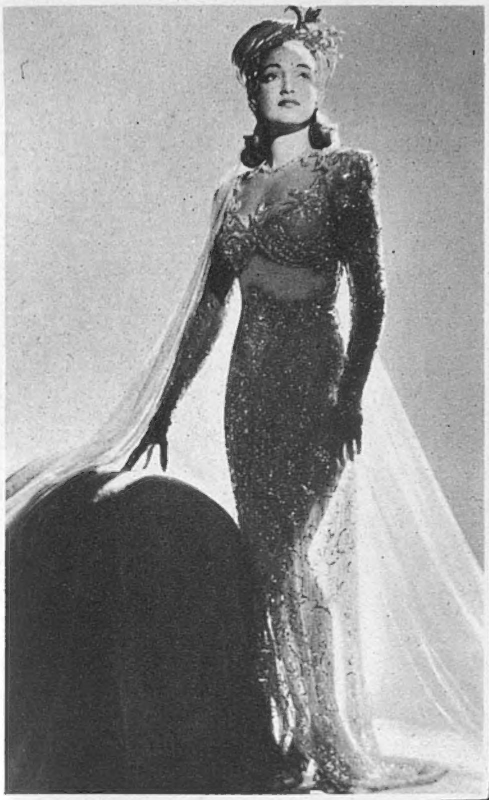
*Vaudeville: "MEN IN SHADOW." Sabotage in France. John Mills.

**Victoria Palace: "TWENTY TO ONE." Laugh-making racing musical play. Lupino Lane; Greta Fayne; Winifred Sloane.

*Westminster: Season of Shakespeare, with Robert Atkins and first-rate cast.

*Wyndham's: "QUIET WEEK-END." Sequel to "Quiet Wedding."

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre, to avoid disappointment.



DOROTHY LAMOUR, *teamed with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in "Road to Morocco" (Plaza), reviewed here, appears as a native princess. This new "Road" picture emphasises comedy, not the music. Lamour's particular solo is entitled "Constantly."*

Hollywood has never sent us more exciting scenes of New York at night, of the lighted skyscrapers, of the Statue of Liberty with a burning torch in her hand. This is indeed the Great White Way and no fooling.

A short film of a very different kind, but with no little satisfaction, too, in its way, can be seen in the Gaumont programme with "In Which We Serve." It is the Rimsky-Korsakov "SPANISH FIESTA," the second Hollywood production of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. "Spanish Fiesta," to my mind, is a very much better screen job than its predecessor, "Café Parisien." It may just be that the cameramen have grown wiser; it may be that the Rimsky-Korsakov is a ballet in which the rhythms of arms and body can atone in some degree for the moments when the dance-step is broken, but I feel less cheated here than I did in "Café Parisien." "Spanish Fiesta," as films go, is a pretty good job of continuous movement. It is a screen ballet that nearly is a ballet.

Technicolor, of course, has had a field-day among these taffetas and velvets and foamy laces. There is plenty of excuse here for the hot colours—reds of every shade, plum, cherry, sienna, tangerine, and right through the range to old gold and apricot. Nothing could be more effective, either, than the black, white and scarlet of Massine's and Tamara Toumanova's costumes, as the pair crack out their gypsy dance on a floor of steely moonlight blue.

The title-song, "Road to Morocco," is sung by BOB HOPE *and* BING CROSBY *as two American hoboes shipwrecked on the Moroccan coast, now seen behind bars! Crosby also sings a number called "Moonlight Becomes You," with Dorothy Lamour as the object of his sentiment.*

Although it has one of those stodgy love-stories that some of us find hard to swallow, "NATASHA" (Tatler) is one of the more effective of the modern Soviet films. It is about the work of the Red Cross nurses of the Eastern Front—their training, their life in rough field hospitals behind the lines, the man's part they are prepared to play in battle.

Natasha (Zoya Fyodorova) is a peasant girl who escapes from her captured village and becomes a nurse. Not just A Nurse, but a nurse of nurses, an officer of sorts, the leader of her little band of girls. Two men love Natasha: a soldier whom she believes killed, and a parachutist whom she nurses back to health. The men, in this woman's film, seem featureless figures, and it was all one to me which she married, or if she married either. But Natasha's work, as apart from her love-life, is really absorbing. There are moving scenes of service under fire, of operations performed and routine carried on while bombs are crashing around. There is a memorable sequence of a journey through the wintry woods, the bullets of enemy snipers tossing up the snow like spray. The film is not great craftsmanship, but it conveys in a high measure the sense of comradeship, the mutual strength of people sharing dangerous service.

"Natasha" has been dubbed into English by K. H. Frank and Lionel Britton, and if we must have dubbing at all, we could hardly have it done better. Googie Withers, a screen actress who is coming well to the front in dramatic parts these days, provides the English voice of Natasha. So well has she understood her prototype, and so cunningly have the technicians synchronised the voice with lip movements, that we are seldom aware of any sort of a split personality, of that schizophrenia that is the curse of dubbing on the screen.

DONA DRAKE *plays second feminine lead, as handmaiden to Dorothy Lamour's native princess, and Bob Hope's girl friend. Her solo is entitled "Aladdin's Daughter."*

Once every year or so it seems to be the custom for Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, those happy hikers, to hit the Road to Somewhere or other, and find Lamour, *toujours* Lamour, at the end of it. This time it is the "ROAD TO MOROCCO" (Plaza), and what with sheiks and camels, not to mention the ghost of Bob Hope's Aunt Lucy, the trip is a brisk and lively one. The adventurers, in fact, die a thousand deaths before they finally bring their houri home to New York City. It is great stuff, put over with what some might call Surrealism, and some just plain frenzy. To quote the words of one eminent camel, "This is the screwiest picture I've ever been at."

"The War Against Mrs. Hadley" (Empire), reviewed in this article, is a "Mrs. Miniver" film from the Transatlantic angle. FAY BAINTER *plays Mrs. Hadley and* JEAN ROGERS *her daughter.*

COUNTESS WANDA OSTROWSKA, *between* H.E. *the* POLISH AMBASSADOR *(l.) and* H.E. *the* PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR, *at the Leger Galleries. The latter opened her show of water-colours of Portugal.*

EDWARD G. ROBINSON, *star of "This Man Reuter," visited Reuter's H.Q. He is at the news-desk with* MR. COLE, *News Manager;* MR. CARTER, *secretary; and* MR. J. CHANCELLOR, *joint general manager.*

LT. LYUDMILA PAVLICHENKO, *Soviet girl sniper who has accounted for 309 Nazis, tried a rifle belonging to a member of the Home Guard guard of honour at the Ministry of Information.*

Left: MRS. BEATRICE WILKENS, J.P., *Mayor of East Ham, is adjusting the Mayoress's chain of office on her daughter,* PRIVATE EVA WILKENS, A.T.S.

Right: MRS. MABS JEAN A. POMEROY, *second daughter of Mrs. A. Clements, of Beckenham, Kent, is engaged to Captain Trevor Alan Wilkins, The Buffs.*

MRS. J. DOBSON *is posed in a "win the war" ensemble—special hood equipment with goggles and leather apron for operating a huge machine for munition work. She is enjoying a short break with* MRS. J. FEIRN.

H.E. *the* SOVIET AMBASSADOR *and* SIR EDWIN LUTYENS *opened the exhibition of Soviet Life in War and Peace at Hertford House, in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the U.S.S.R.* MADAME MAISKY *is on the right.*

AMBASSADORS, MINISTERS, GENERALS, A GIRL SNIPER, BRIDES AND

CAPTAIN *the* HON. DAVID WOODHOUSE, [illegible] *son of Lord and Lady Terrington, married* MISS SUZANNE IRWIN, *Subaltern A.T.S., youngest daughter of Colonel Irwin, Justicetown, Carlisle.*

WING COMMANDER I. S. SMITH, D.F.C. *and Bar, the brilliant New Zealand fighter pilot, married* MISS JOAN H. DEBENHAM *at St. George's, Hanover Square. The bride is an officer in the W.A.A.F.*

MISS JOAN DOROTHY TATE, *twin daughter of* CAPTAIN MAURICE TATE *(centre), the Sussex and England cricketer, married* MR. DEREK HUXLEY, *the Rosslyn Park player, at St. John's Church, Burgess Hill.*

Left: LIEUT. JOHN F. WATTON, *son of Mr. S. L. Watton, is the prisoner of war artist, examples of whose work appear on another page.*

Right: MISS DIANA MARGARET (ANN) DUXBURY, W.R.N.S., *only daughter of Mr. Frank Duxbury, of Kenburk House, Sullington, is engaged to Sub-Lieut. E. A. Carr, R.N.V.R.*

The LORD MAYOR *escorted* MRS. WINSTON CHURCHILL, *and the Lady Mayoress followed with the* PRIME MINISTER, *in the procession to the Mansion House banqueting hall, where Mr. Churchill made his stirring speech.*

LIEUT.-GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER *is the C.-in-C. of all Allied Forces in French Africa.* MAJOR-GENERAL MARK WAYNE CLARK *(r.) is his second-in-command.*

BRIDEGROOMS: HEADLINE FACES IN THE WEEK'S GOOD NEWS.

THE CROW.*

By EDWARD CRANSTON.

MRS. BOLTON always referred to her only son Albert as "that young ragamuffin Bert." Her husband called him a good-for-nothing waster, and the headmaster of the local council school dismissed him on the end-of-term report with a brief: "This is an undisciplined and unprincipled boy." In the Navy his messmates alluded to him as "the Crow," and the harassed captain of his first ship had written on his confidential papers that he was "a difficult case, psychologically unsuitable for the Service."

All these remarks were probably well deserved. Albert Bolton was definitely unsuited to the Navy. In fact, he was unsuited to any trade which demanded of him that he should be in a certain place at a certain time. He lived in a world of his own making—a world in which the needs and considerations of Albert Bolton came first, and those of anybody else second. He had tried to explain this to the Commodore of the training barracks after being arrested on a charge of desertion.

"You see, Sir, it was like this. My sister Ethel was getting married and I wanted to be there. I couldn't get off, because I was duty, so I just popped into the train and went!"

The surprising part was that his sister really had been married. The less surprising part was that Ordinary Seaman Bolton had remained behind to celebrate the fact with some of his friends, and when the police found him two days later, had been so much the worse for drink that they had been compelled to carry him to the station. That was his first offence and he had been let off lightly. But more followed, with the result that Albert Bolton had an intimate acquaintance with the interiors of the Portsmouth and Chatham detention barracks.

When he finished training they sent him to a battleship. On his arrival, both the Captain and the Commander had lectured him on the stupidity of flouting authority.

"You 're starting with a clean record as far as we 're concerned," they had said. "Now, try and mend your ways and no one 's going to bother you."

For two months Ordinary Seaman Bolton had tried. He had really and honestly tried. The Captain and the Commander began to congratulate themselves. It only needed the personal touch.

And then one day a letter had arrived from an old friend in the Midlands. He had been lucky with the horses. What a pity it was that Bert could not help him to spend the proceeds. Or could he?

For an hour or so Albert Bolton argued with his conscience. Then he went ashore and caught a train for the Midlands. After all, he would be back by morning and no one would ever know he had gone. That night there was an air raid. The officer of his turret reported that Ordinary Seaman Bolton was absent from his place of duty.

The sentence was three weeks' detention.

After that they sent him to a destroyer. The Navy believes in giving every man every chance. He liked the destroyer. After the battleship it was like a large family. Bert, with his loud laugh and ready tongue, was soon a favourite on the mess-decks. The officers liked him too. He worked well and cheerfully. If only he kept out of trouble . . .

But that was hoping for too much.

It happened that the destroyer was in port only fifteen miles from Albert's home. And Albert's uncle was staying there. Albert liked his uncle, and they both liked beer. He overstayed his leave by three days. This time he came back voluntarily and was immediately put under open arrest.

The coxswain greeted him with a gloomy smile. "When we gets back to harbour after to-night's patrol you won't 'alf cop it. The Old Man 's a decent sort, but 'e won't stand no nonsense." Albert Bolton knew only too well that he would stand no nonsense. He had said as much on the day he joined the ship. He cursed his uncle and the temptation that was beer.

The Channel looked grey and cold and forbidding. Albert Bolton, crouching behind the scanty shelter afforded by the Lewis-gun shield, contemplated it with a gloomy eye. On the bridge above him the Captain stood by the chart table with a cup of cocoa in his hand.

"I don't like this moonlight, pilot—bad as daytime from a visibility point of view!"

The navigator put down his pencil and nodded: "Let 's hope there aren't any bombers about."

"Cheer up, Bert!" said one of the signalmen. "They can't hang you for it—unless you killed someone. Don't suppose you remember whether you did or not, though!"

"Someone 'll kill you one day if you go on being so ruddy funny all the time!" said Ordinary Seaman Bolton bitterly. "'Ere! Give me some of that tea!"

He stood there sipping the hot liquid and wondering why he was always getting into trouble. It was never intentional. It just happened that trouble sought him out. He cursed himself for a fool. He liked this ship, liked the life and work, and understood the discipline that operated only to ensure efficiency. He reflected that for the first time in his life he had been really happy. The Captain was a good sort. So were the rest of them; and to-morrow he would become an outcast again, probably leave the ship after his punishment was over. They might even throw him out of the Navy this time. Albert Bolton was surprised to find how much that thought hurt him. It was more than pride. For all his many punishments he had grown very fond of this new life. Particularly this ship . . .

"Hell!" he muttered, and viciously kicked at a bucket on the deck.

High overhead they could hear the drone of the aircraft engines. A steady, high-pitched note.

"Fighters," said the Captain. "All positions stand by!"

Albert Bolton heard the order being passed down from the bridge. He straightened himself behind his Lewis gun and checked that the ammunition pan was loaded correctly. The noise of the engines grew louder.

"Three of them, I think," said the Captain.

There was a moment's pause and then, with a great roar, a Messerschmitt swooped down at them from the clear sky, his guns pointing straight towards the destroyer's bridge.

"Open fire!" yelled the Captain.

Albert Bolton heard the dull, monotonous boom of the pom-pom away to his right, and then a few seconds later the Lewis gun leaped into life in his hands. He could hear the bullets from the aircraft striking the deck above his head and clanging against the metal of the bridge structure behind him.

The machine was dead in his sights now. He held the quivering gun in a grip of iron and kept his finger firmly on the trigger. And then quite suddenly there was silence. Albert Bolton realised that the ammunition pan was empty. The pom-pom had stopped firing too. He wondered what had happened to the 'plane. As he stooped to pick up a new pan he heard the Captain's voice hailing from above.

"Well done, Bolton—you finished her! And she damn near finished us!" he added to the navigator, who was standing beside him. "Now for his pals!"

The second machine had begun its dive before Bolton had time to reload. He felt a sharp pain in his right arm as he lifted the drum into place, and he knew he had been hit. The Messerschmitt had swooped overhead and away into the night before he could bring his gun to bear.

As the tray clicked into position he heard another roar as the third machine came in to the attack. The pom-pom would not be able to fire, as the 'plane was coming in from right ahead. Desperately he slewed the Lewis gun round until it was pointing directly over the bows. His right arm was stiff and painful, but he managed to hold the gun steady as he pressed his face against the sight. There she was now! In the centre of the cross-wires. His trigger-finger contracted as the bullets began to sing past his head.

The Captain leaned against the side of the bridge and drew a deep breath. There was a thin trickle of blood running down one side of his face. He turned to the navigator.

"Not bad, pilot! Two down and no casualties on our side!"

"Both from the same Lewis gun, Sir—Bolton's."

The First Lieutenant appeared at the top of the bridge ladder. In the moonlight his face was white and strained.

"I 'm afraid there is a casualty, Sir—Ordinary Seaman Bolton—shot through the head. He 's dead, Sir—must have hit him just as he got the 'plane."

The Captain followed the speaker down the ladder. Albert Bolton lay very still beside his gun. The Captain raised his hand and slowly removed his cap. He stood there for a minute in silence and then climbed back to the bridge. Except to give the necessary orders, he did not speak again until the ship reached harbour.

Mrs. Bolton stared at the letter before her. "Your son . . . died gallantly at his post. . . . Am recommending him for . . ."

The words swam before her eyes.

"The young ragamuffin," she whispered.

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

MR. PETER DE POLNAY, here seen with MRS. DE POLNAY: For having lived dangerously as a pro-English inhabitant of German-occupied Paris, and writing a best-seller about it.

PETER DE POLNAY is *the author of* "DEATH AND TO-MORROW," *one of the books which everyone is reading. He is Hungarian by birth, English by tongue and education, and has two novels,* "*Angry Man's Tale*" *and* "*Children, My Children,*" *to his credit. He was in Paris in 1940, and stayed on after the German occupation, saw the hordes invade the City of Light, and tried to probe the reasons for the fall of France, while working to spread British propaganda. Eventually he escaped into the unoccupied zone, but landed in prison on account of his pro-British sympathies. After much suffering and danger he successfully made his way into Spain, and was finally handed over to the British authorities. He was then able to come to this country and join up in the Pioneers. Mrs. de Polnay, who was married last June, is an artist, and designed the jacket for her husband's latest book. She is a daughter of the late Sir Reginald Mitchell Banks.*

PORTRAIT BY BERTRAM PARK, SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH."

C

MORE SURREALISTIC THAN SURREALISM ITSELF: WAR DÉBRIS IN THE WAKE OF THE FLYING AXIS.

The skeleton of a crashed 'plane, with fabric fluttering from its tail. In the distance to the right a wrecked engine separated from its fuselage has bent propellers.

STRANGE shapes are left behind littering the North African desert as the Eighth Army and the Allied Air Force drive on, sending Rommel's armies ever westward, from Egypt into Libya, and on. Surrealism in painting and music and literature foretold oddly correctly the effects which dynamic aerial bombing and H.E. would have not only in sound but on houses and on the armaments of war themselves, and the pictures taken by Cecil Beaton in his recent M.O.I.-sponsored tour in the Middle East are worthy of the attention of a Salvador Dali, a Picasso, in the abandonment of all reason, their pictorial significance and the final complete subjectivity of these objective instruments of war! These pictures, combined

[*Continued opposite.*

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

A soleless boot lies in the sand, with the r... water-bottle, opened tin cans a piece of...

No gas attacks! Useless Italian respirators a... which Montgomery and Co...

nain ... an interrupted meal, with a battered
of ...ter... r track and an ammunition-belt.

...re flung away as their owners join in the retreat
...ningham turned into a rout.

DERELICT ARMAMENTS IN THE NORTH AFRICAN DESERT TAKE ON A PICTORIAL SIGNIFICANCE.

Remains of a blown-up tank sinking into the sand: through the circular frame can be seen two German guns at a position of low-angle fire.

Continued.]

with our reading of newspaper articles descriptive of the rout of Rommel's armies, help us to realise something of what the desert looks like now for hundreds of miles, with an odd assortment of pieces of 'planes, tanks, guns—beautiful, some of them, as some of our ugliest buildings have, under bombardment, become dramatic and beautiful. Perhaps when the sands of time and the desert sands have flowed on, some thousands of years hence, when we have advanced immeasurably further in scientific destruction, these objects will be recovered by excited archæologists, classified, and sent to some museum as ancient trophies of bygone days, to be surrounded by an open-mouthed crowd of gaping sightseers!

WIFE OF THE C.-IN-C. OUR VICTORIOUS MIDDLE EAST FORCES.

LADY MARGARET ALEXANDER *with* ROSE *and* SHANE, *her daughter and elder son.*

The children's hour: SHANE, ROSE, *and Rose's doll listen to* LADY MARGARET ALEXANDER *reading aloud.*

Equestrian study: Lady Margaret watches Shane offering an apple to the pony, ridden by Rose.

LADY MARGARET ALEXANDER is the wife of General the Hon. Sir Harold Alexander, G.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C., Commander-in-Chief the Middle East, to whom the King's message of congratulation on the Eighth Army's magnificent victory was addressed on November 4. General Alexander was appointed C.-in-C. the Middle East in August. He served with distinction in the 1914-18 war; and, more recently, commanded the Irish Guards. He took over the command from Lord Gort at Dunkirk in 1940; and, after the fall of Rangoon, he was called in to conduct the retreat from Burma. With General Montgomery he directed and planned the present victorious North African operations, for which he has received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. Lady Margaret Alexander is the younger daughter of the Earl of Lucan, and married General—then Colonel—Alexander in 1931. They have three children, Rose, Shane and Brian, born in 1932, 1935, and 1939. Lady Margaret is an active member of the W.V.S.

Swing-time in Lady Margaret Alexander's home in Windsor forest: Rose and Shane in the garden with their mother.

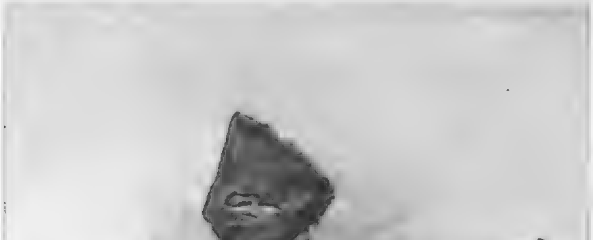
GREEK PRINCESS IN LONDON.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF GREECE, *daughter of Princess Aspasia and of the late King Alexander, and niece of King George of the Hellenes, is at present making her home in London. She was born in Athens on March 25, 1921, and thus celebrated her twenty-first birthday this year. Three photographs of King Peter of Yugoslavia stand on the occasional table by the sofa on which the Princess is posed. Last June her engagement to his Majesty was rumoured, but it was officially announced that there could be no question of King Peter marrying until the end of the war; and Princess Alexandra stated that she could not contemplate marriage while such dreadful conditions prevail in her country.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOPICAL.

Perfect concealment for gunners and grenade throwers: A screen of wood, wire and leaves—constructed in 30 minutes.

Soldier into tree! A sniper concealed by leafy branches stuck and tied over his person.



Sniping suit—latest model: A sharpshooter in sacking dyed green and brown for camouflage purposes.

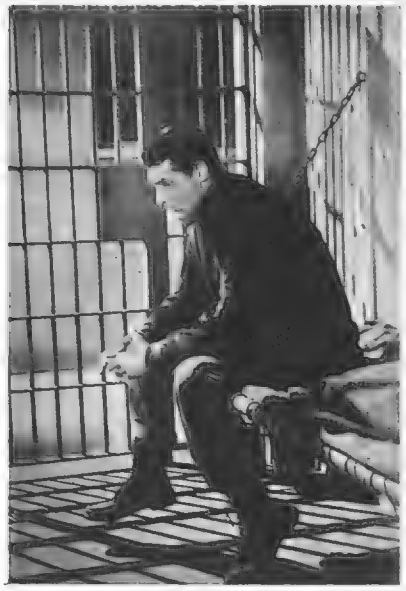
INVISIBILITY GUARANTEED: THE ART OF CAMOUFLAGE.

EVERYONE knows the importance of self-concealment in wartime, but few realise how invisibility can be guaranteed by following approved methods. Our photographs illustrate a magnificent demonstration given by a battalion of the London Home Guard, and show that the greatest protection can be given by comparatively simple means, which make the wonders of the Cap of Darkness or Siegfried's famous Tarnhelm seem definitely over-rated!

The sniper takes cover, and his green and brown sacking suit makes him disappear and melt into the shrub-and-leaf background.

This is a Man! He is seated in the sink of a bombed house, wrapped round with swathes of hanging wall-paper—and it would take an eagle eye indeed, to spot him!

MAN-HUNT AND ROMANTIC TRIANGLE: "THE TALK OF THE TOWN."



Falsely accused of arson and murder: Leopold Dilg (CARY GRANT), *victim of a frame-up by his employer.*

Dilg takes refuge in a cottage owned by Nora (JEAN ARTHUR). *She has let it to a legal theorist, Lightcap, and is getting it ready.*

Lightcap (RONALD COLMAN), *nominated for a Supreme Court post, learns the identity of Dilg. Nora insists on his innocence.*

Nora and Lightcap see the police posters advertising Dilg as a wanted man. He is supposed to have murdered Bracken.

Lightcap (right) forces Regina (GLENDA FARRELL) *to reveal the whereabouts of Bracken, captures the missing man, and rushes him to the court.*

Bracken (TOM TYLER; *left*), *whom Dilg is accused of killing, is rounded up by Lightcap, to save Dilg. Nora lends a hand.*

"THE TALK OF THE TOWN," Columbia's new production, comes to the Regal and the London Pavilion on November 29. The story is concerned with Dilg, falsely accused leftist workman; legal theorist Lightcap, and warm-hearted Nora Shelley, who acts as his housekeeper and secretary. Dilg seeks refuge in Nora's house, and the three become firm friends. After thrilling chases, a prolonged man-hunt, and some violent encounters, Dilg's innocence is established, and he and Nora are married.

Riot in the court! Lynchers seek to capture the innocent Dilg. Lightcap is accusing Bracken.

"MRS. MINIVER'S" HIGHLAND FLING!

GREER GARSON *is highly elated to do a song-and-dance number in abbreviated kilts in her new picture, M.-G.-M's "Random Harvest." It comes as a gay and glamorous change from playing "serious girl" rôles, such as her parts in "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," "Pride and Prejudice," "Blossoms in the Dust" and "Mrs. Miniver." It was recently announced that Miss Garson and Mr. Richard Ney, who played Clem Miniver in the film, had applied for a marriage licence and that the wedding was fixed for the week-end of Nov. 8.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

PETER THE GREAT, no less than Conrad II., deserves the title of *innovator mirabilis*. He changed the face of Russia and altered the position of its heart. "The capital on the Baltic is unique among cities in that it did not grow, but was made." Of the buildings he caused to be put up there, little remains: "in a city of thrilling individuality," says Mr. Christopher Marsden, "only the framework has survived of the Petrovian original."

A giant himself, and grandiose in nearly all his projects, in architecture Peter seems to have preferred the intimate to the florid, and the first buildings of St. Petersburg were Dutch in style. But, as Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell observes in his delightful preface to "Palmyra of the North," "the whole population of Holland would have had to be transplanted in order to keep it clean." For the rest of the eighteenth century, Russia, with one or two short-lived exceptions, was governed by women. They inherited Peter's interest in building, if not his taste; and theirs is the great age of Russian architecture. "The palaces of Rastrelli and Cameron," says Mr. Sitwell, "are comparable to Potsdam, to Hampton Court or to Versailles."

Foreign Influence. It is significant that Rastrelli and Cameron were foreigners. The Russian art of the eighteenth century is a borrowed art, borrowed in the main from Italian models. The elder Rastrelli, who came to Russia in 1715, was primarily a sculptor; it is to his son, "Rastrelli the Magnificent," that we owe the great palaces, Tsarskoe Selo and the rest; his activity between the years 1744 and 1759 must, says Mr. Marsden, "be without parallel in history." Adaptable like all Italians, he quickly gave his work a Russian idiom; the barbaric splendour of the Imperial Courts found fantastic and rococo expression in the buildings he designed to house them. In their different ways the Empress Anne and the Empress Elizabeth rejoiced in extravagance and ostentation; but Catherine, a princess from an obscure German state, did not; with her accession the influence of Rastrelli waned and was supplanted by that of the Scotsman, Cameron, a man of whom almost nothing is known, but who, with his classical ideals, revolutionised architecture in Russia. How can his success be explained?

First [says Mr. Marsden] we find an influence in the Empress's own tastes and inclinations. To have lived in Elizabeth's entourage at Tsarskoe must have been all but unendurable for her. We can admire Rastrelli, but we can also sympathise with Catherine. How vulgar, how barbarous, it must all have seemed to her! Not only the continual noise and hysterical uproar of Elizabeth's existence, but all the gold, all the restless exuberance of the decoration, the lushness and pinkness, the saccharine sweetness and blatant femininity of it all with its blousy curves and sexy richness! Like an unending Rumpelmayer diet of éclairs and whipped cream to an interminable, amplified accompaniment of Friml and Strauss. How natural for her detached and intellectual mind to long for something else—anything else, provided it was different. The classical—the historical: of course, she jumped at that.

The Three Empresses. Mr. Marsden's book is more than a survey of the development of architecture in eighteenth-century Russia; it has something to say about all the arts, including ceramics, which Vinogradov, working on models from Meissen and China, brought to a high level of delicate perfection. But you cannot understand art without a knowledge of the civilisation of which it forms a part, or of the people who epitomise that civilisation. Mr. Marsden's portraits of the three Empresses (Catherine's is rather slighter than the others) are fascinating. In all three women there is an element so wilful and extravagant that we, in this age of discipline and uniformity, can hardly credit it. Anne's appalling practical jokes, Elizabeth's unrestrained life of love, seem to belong to existence on another planet. That such excesses heightened the value of living for themselves and all who came into contact with them cannot be doubted: yet in all this spectacular expense of spirit there is a touch of megalomania, a glorying in the mere exercise of power, that prevent its concrete manifestations being quite first-rate. Of this Mr. Marsden is well aware; he brings to his study of "Renaissance" Russia the sense of proportion that it lacked itself.

The Evacuee Problem. Evacuees of one sort or another are such a familiar phenomenon of contemporary life that they find their way into at least one novel in ten. To treat them impartially is as difficult in fiction as it is in life. It is obvious that they ought to be pitied; and almost equally obvious that their temporary hosts, who may not have the time, space or inclination to look after them properly, are to be pitied too.

"Nobody's Darlings" suggests, by its very title, comparison with Mr. Joyce Cary's "Charley is My Darling," another novel showing what happened when children from the poorer districts of London were thrust into an English country village. In the latter the strangers were guilty of almost every excess; though Mr. Cary is too detached to say so, they were, in fact, a terrible pest. Miss Margaret Iles gives us the other side of the picture. Upon a village community noteworthy for every form of meanness, cupidity, and double-dealing descend three consignments of children, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. These little innocents do not play much part in the story; their rôle is to be victims; first of the villagers' resentment, then of their greed—for the astuter inhabitants quickly realised that, properly handled, the defenceless newcomers, with the Government allowance they implied, could be made a source of profit. Meanwhile the school-teachers wrangled unceasingly among themselves. "Why do children return to London?" rhetorically demanded Mr. Gawthrop, one of the few likeable characters in the story, of his queer friend, Perry. "Risk of death is preferable to the kind of endurance expected of them in the reception areas."

But the exposure of a wrong, however convincingly done, does not make a novel. Perry is the real hero of Miss Iles' story. An unheroic hero, full of low cunning like Ulysses, and with one main object in life, the acquisition of a coveted house at the least possible expense, this curious cowman somehow manages to engage our sympathy. Partly because his rivals in double-crossing are even more disagreeable than he; partly because there is a streak of universality in him that the reader, however unwillingly, is bound to recognise. "Nobody's Darlings" is not easy to read, its method is so jerky and discontinuous; but it has an incisive quality that etches itself on the memory.

MISS CLARISSA CHURCHILL, *niece of the Premier;* LADY JULIET DUFF, LORD BERNERS *and* GREGORIO PRIETO *were snapped at Mr. Prieto's Private View of paintings and drawings at the Lefèvre Galleries. They were gazing intently at a portrait of Lord Berners holding triumphantly a large fish. Prieto studied at the San Fernando in Madrid; at the Museums of France and England, and was later awarded the Spanish Grand Prix de Rome.*

London in the "Blitz." "Darkness Falls from the Air" is about London in the "blitz"—at least, that is its scene. The narrator, Bill Sarratt, a man of thirty-odd, working in one of the Ministries, takes the war more seriously, he feels, than do some of his colleagues; in a scheme for reorganising industry he is for compulsion. But his chief trouble is more personal. Marcia, his wife, is in love with Stephen, a good-looking emotion-monger and born maker of scenes, married to a long-suffering and forgiving wife. Sarratt, too, is long-suffering and forgiving, but he hates scenes: his natural idiom of conversation is dry, facetious, sarcastic, rather in the Hemingway tradition; his endearments are "honey" and "my sweet," his expressions of irritation "hell" and "so what." He must have been difficult to work with. Towards the end, Stephen says to him, "You always kill everything. Nothing can live near you. You make it flat and grey and dead and sterile like yourself."

It says much for Mr. Nigel Balchin's impartiality of presentation that this charge does not seem altogether unfounded. We sympathise with Sarratt; we recognise the emotion that underlies his modish, laconic utterances; but to people like Marcia and Stephen his limitations of mood, his general attitude of exasperated efficiency and impatient common sense, must have been decidedly blighting. Marcia herself, we suppose, had a heart of gold, but she lived entirely by her feelings, and from moment to moment. "It's just that you're not at all childish and I am rather," she said to Sarratt with one of her many flashes of insight. The question for her was, would Stephen commit suicide if she left him; and she could not bring herself to put it to the test.

Disorderly Emotions. As a study of emotional entanglements and maladjustments "Darkness Falls from the Air" is very effective; it would be still more effective, I think, if the quality of emotion were not so febrile and so quickly affected by one drink more or less. In portraying the movements of the heart it is doubtful if cleverness is a great asset to a novelist; in comedy and in satire it certainly is, and Mr. Balchin excels in both. Sarratt's desperate efforts to break through the routine of the office, his conversations with colleagues who were bent on throwing a spanner in the works, his interview with the Minister—these are brilliant illustrations of the way a single-minded man may be checkmated by his inferiors in intelligence, if they are his superiors in management; and the man's world to which they introduce us makes a telling contrast to the exaggeratedly feminine atmosphere of incipient heart-break which Marcia creates around her.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

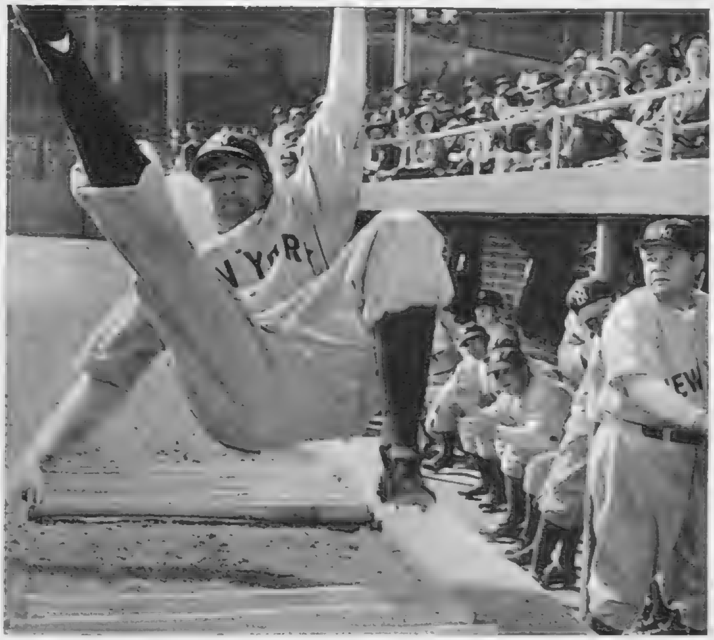
Palmyra of the North. The First Days of St. Petersburg. By Christopher Marsden. (*Faber; 16s.*)
Nobody's Darlings. By Margaret Iles. (*Gollancz; 9s. 6d.*)
Darkness Falls from the Air. By Nigel Balchin. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)

Eleanor (TERESA WRIGHT) is delighted to hear from sports-writer Blake (WALTER BRENNAN) that Lou (GARY COOPER) is to play for New York's most famous team.

The visit to the hospital: Lou has given up a possible career as an engineer to become a professional athlete in order to raise money to pay for his mother's operation.

Falling in love—with a bump! Eleanor (TERESA WRIGHT) surprised when she takes a toss engineered by Lou—in retaliation for her shout of "Tangletoes!"

"THE PRIDE OF THE YANKEES," due at the Gaumont, Haymarket, on November 23, is the story of a famous young American athlete and baseball player. As a boy, Lou dreams of a sports career, but, in obedience to his parents' wishes, determines to be an engineer. His mother's illness makes it essential for him to earn money at once to pay for an operation, and he becomes a professional athlete; and marries Eleanor after an amusing baseball-match introduction. His brilliant sports career is cut short by infantile paralysis, but Lou "can take it," and shows as much courage in his forced retirement as he has in his rise to success. Gary Cooper plays the grown-up Lou; and Douglas Croft is the boy Lou.



Falling in love—literally! Lou, playing for the first time with the N.Y. Yankees, trips over a pile of bats and hears Eleanor's voice cry "Tangletoes!"—and set off the whole stadium.

Lou Gehrig, determined to carry out his parents' wishes and be an engineer, works his way through the University as a waiter. He is a star athlete, and as a boy has dreamed of a sports career.

Mom Gehrig (ELSA JANSSEN), who works as a cook at Columbia University, and Pop Gehrig (LUDWIG STOSSEL) are deeply distressed that the young Lou (DOUGLAS CROFT) cares only for sport.

BASEBALL PLAYER'S DRAMA: "THE PRIDE OF THE YANKEES."

TOMMY TRINDER *giving* "*I Mean You.*"

EDDY READY *and* JOY *in* "*Idyll at Dawning.*"

"*Manhattan Melody,*" *with* PEGGY McCORMACK.

CHARLES CAIROLI *of the* *Cairoli Bros.*

Two of the girls of the CORPS DE BALLET.

TOMMY TRINDER *as Carmen Miranda in* "*Pull Up for Carmen.*"

"THE MUSIC OF AMERICA"—"*National Emblem.*"

THE THREE IN HARMONY *from* "*The South.*"

BLACK'S "BEST BIB AND TUCKER."

GEORGE BLACK puts on his "BEST BIB AND TUCKER" at the London Palladium, and the show—under the command of Tommy Trinder, so to speak—is a gay, confident, high-speed affair, with spectacle, dancing, juggling and buffoonery in good measure. The high-spot of the Trinder humour is perhaps Tommy's appearance as Carmen Miranda in "Pull Up for Carmen," in which he gives his number, "No, No, No, No, Columbus." The dancing and the music are both gay and lively. In "The Music of America" we are given "The West," "The South," "The Blues" and "Manhattan Melody," and the Silly Symphony of the Cairoli Brothers is another first-rate number. [PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROYE.]

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LUXURIOUS fashions are things of the past; nevertheless, there are delightful substitutes which have passed the censorship of the Board of Trade. Selfridges, Oxford Street, are making a feature of coats carried out in fur fabric, one of which is illustrated on the left. It is a material which wears extremely well, and on which showers have no deleterious effect. The pattern suggests chinchilla influenced by marble. There are those of ocelot; in the distance this simuli fur looks like its prototype. There is Indian lamb, beaver, as well as seal coney, and an infinite variety of others. It seems almost unnecessary to add that there is a collection of wrap coats, some of the Austerity and others of the Utility character

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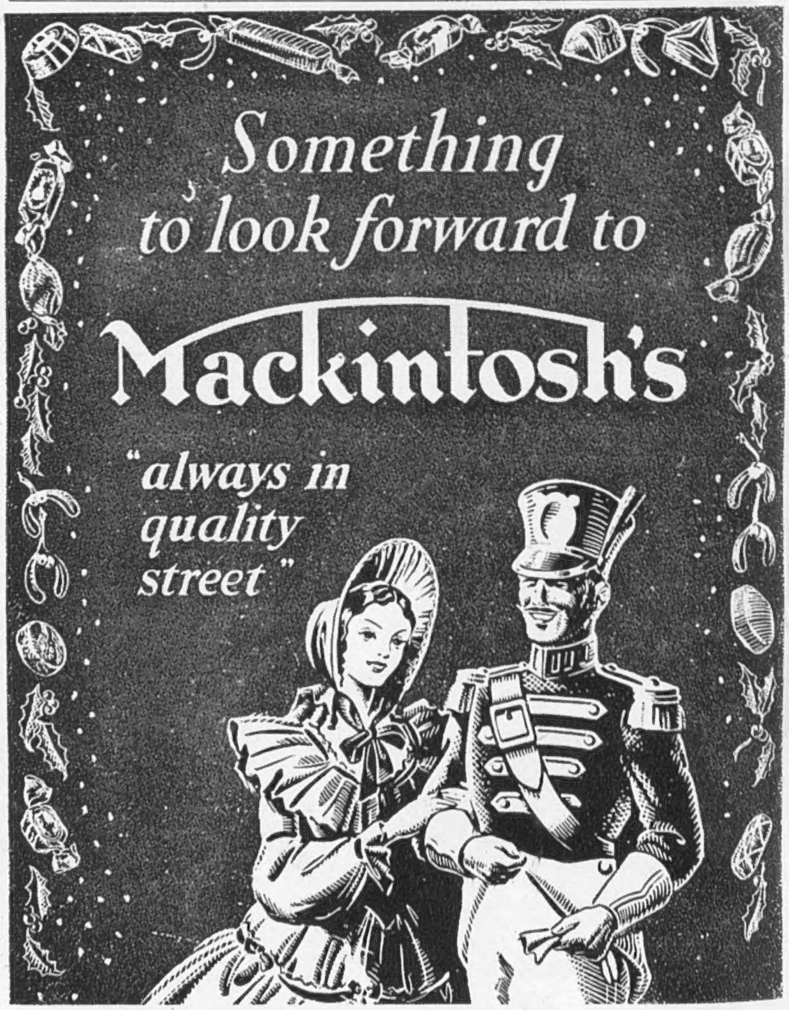

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